

2 Samuel 21 - Thursday, July 23rd, 2015

- Chapter 20 ended with Joab repositioning himself as David's military commander after killing Amasa and a rebel named Sheba.
- At this point in David's reign as king, it's believed that he has grown much older now and he's probably in his early to mid 60's.
- As such, David is much wiser than he was when he was younger, which is what we're about to see as we pick it up in verse 1.

1 Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, "It is because of Saul and his bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites."

- Couple of thoughts here on just verse one, the first of which is that David realized it was God Who brought about this famine.
- In other words, David knew that God was trying to get his attention, and the way He was able to do it was to allow this famine.
- This speaks to a very important principle in our lives as Christians', such that, God will allow things like this to get our attention.

- One of the lessons I'm learning in my walk with the Lord is that often times, He will allow adversity to strike so I'll inquire of Him.
- And, the adversity isn't arbitrary in the sense that God knows the exact area in my life where the adversity will hit the hardest.
- Sometimes, adversity strikes in the marriage relationship or in the area of finances, because God knows it gets our attention.

Ecclesiastes 7:14 (NKJV) — 14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, But in the day of adversity consider: Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other, So that man can find out nothing that will come after him.

- Be that as it may, it's important to understand that not all adversity is necessarily allowed by God in order to get our attention.
- It is incumbent on us to have spiritual discernment when adversity strikes; we shouldn't see a spiritual reason behind every trial.
- By that I mean, often times, adversity strikes simply because we live in a fallen world and we will have tribulation in this world.

John 16:33 (NIV) — 33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

- A second thought concerning David seeking the Lord because of this famine has to do with the fact that it took him three years.
- It's been suggested by some commentators that David was grossly remiss in not seeking the Lord in the first year of the famine.
- Others suggest that by the third year, David realized the famine continued because of a specific sin on the part of the Israelites.

Of this one commentator wrote, "The first and second year he might look upon it as a punishment laid upon them for the common sins of the land: but when he saw it continuing a third year also, he thought there was something in it more than ordinary, and therefore, although he well knew the natural cause to be drought, yet he inquired after the supernatural, as wise men should do."

- Another thought concerning this is that as soon as David inquired of the Lord, he received a specific response from the Lord.
- What's interesting is that the response David receives from the Lord as to the reason for the famine had nothing to do with him.
- In other words, David was not directly responsible for the sin that brought about this famine; rather, it was all because of Saul.

- Apparently, though we don't have a record of it in scripture, Saul betrayed a peace agreement that Joshua made with Gibeon.
- As such, he slaughtered the Gibeonites who were neighbors of the Israelites, and broke Joshua's oath some 400 years prior.
- We do have a record of this oath in Joshua chapter nine, and what's interesting about it is that the Gibeonites deceived Joshua.

Joshua 9:3-6, 14-16 (3) But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, (4) they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, (5) old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry *and* moldy. (6) And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us." ... (14) Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD. (15) So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them. (16) And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they *were* their neighbors who dwelt near them.

- It's interesting to note they sampled the provisions of the first, before they decided that there was no need to inquire of the Lord.
- In other words, their decision was based on what they saw, felt, and tasted, instead of being based on the Word of the Lord.
- There's an interesting account in the book of Genesis where Isaac, like Joshua, makes a decision based solely on feelings.

- It's in Genesis 27, and if you don't mind I'll give you the back-story so as to refresh your memory with how all of this goes down.
- Isaac is blind and near death so he seeks out Esau to give his blessing before he dies, but Rebekah learns of it and tells Jacob.
- In order to deceive Isaac into giving the blessing to Jacob instead of Esau she makes venison and dresses Jacob up like Esau.

Genesis 27:18-27 NIV He went to his father and said, "My father." "Yes, my son," he answered. "Who is it?" (19) Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game so that you may give me your blessing." (20) Isaac asked his son, "How did you find it so quickly, my son?" "The LORD your God gave me success," he replied. (21) Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not."

(22) Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." (23) He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he blessed him. (24) "Are you really my son Esau?" he asked. "I am," he replied. (25) Then he said, "My son, bring me some of your game to eat, so that I may give you my blessing." Jacob brought it to him and he ate; and he brought some wine and he drank. (26) Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come here, my son, and kiss me." (27) So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said, "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed.

- The reason for Isaac making his decision to bless whom he thought was Esau was based entirely on feelings and not the word.
- Even though the words he heard sounded like Jacob, the feelings he felt, and the provisions he sampled were like that of Esau.
- In other words, Isaac went against the word he heard, Jacob's voice, and gave his blessing based on what he felt, Esau's arm.

- Suffice it to say, that just as Isaac was deceived in blessing Jacob, so too was Joshua deceived in making his oath with Gibeon.
- However, it was still an oath that was never to be broken, in spite of the fact that the Gibeonites used deception to achieve it.
- As we're about to see, it was serious enough to rise to the level of God wanting the Israelites to keep this covenant with them.

2 So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; the children of Israel had sworn protection to them, but Saul had sought to kill them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah. 3 Therefore David said to the Gibeonites, "What shall I do for you? And with what shall I make atonement, that you may bless the inheritance of the LORD?" 4 And the Gibeonites said to him, "We will have no silver or gold from Saul or from his house, nor shall you kill any man in Israel for us." So he said, "Whatever you say, I will do for you." 5 Then they answered the king, "As for the man who consumed us and plotted against us, that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the territories of Israel, 6 let seven men of his descendants be delivered to us, and we will hang them before the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, whom the LORD chose." And the king said, "I will give them."

- I find it interesting that David would approach the Gibeonites in this way; instead of dictating to them, he's consulting with them.
- It's for this reason that they seek not silver or gold, nor do they seek an eye for an eye, which they would be justified in seeking.
- Instead, they only seek Saul's decedents who were responsible for and complicit in the wholesale slaughter of their people.

7 But the king spared Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the LORD's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. 8 So the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bore to Saul, and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholahite; 9 and he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them on the hill before the LORD. So they fell, all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley harvest. 10 Now Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock, from the beginning of harvest until the late rains poured on them from heaven. And she did not allow the birds of the air to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night. 11 And David was told what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. 12 Then David went and took the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan his son, from the men of Jabesh Gilead who had stolen them from the street of Beth Shan, where the Philistines had hung them up, after the Philistines had struck down Saul in Gilboa. 13 So he brought up the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from there; and they gathered the bones of those who had been hanged. 14 They buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the tomb of Kish his father. So they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God heeded the prayer for the land.

- It's important to point out the reason God heeded the prayer for the land was because the atonement for the land was made.

Numbers 35:33 (NKJV) — 33 So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it.

15 When the Philistines were at war again with Israel, David and his servants with him went down and fought against the Philistines; and David grew faint. 16 Then Ishbi-Benob, who was one of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose bronze spear was three hundred shekels, who was bearing a new sword, thought he could kill David. 17 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to his aid, and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him, saying, "You shall go out no more with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel." 18 Now it happened afterward that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob. Then Sibbechai the Hushathite killed Saph, who was one of the sons of the giant. 19 Again there was war at Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaare-Oregim the Bethlehemite killed the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. 20 Yet again there was war at Gath, where there was a man of great stature, who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number; and he also was born to the giant. 21 So when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea, David's brother, killed him. 22 These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

- It's been suggested that this is why David took five stones when he only needed one to slay Goliath there in the valley of Elah.
- More specifically, the remaining four were for Goliath's four sons, who according to the customs would have avenged his death.
- Here's the take away from this chapter, Genesis 18:25b says, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right." So too should we.